

**James Blackstone Memorial Library**  
**BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING**  
**Wednesday, November 6, 2019 6:00 p.m.**  
**Location: Branford Police Department**

**MINUTES**

**Trustees (Present):** Maryann Amore, Sandra Baldwin, Beth Law, Mary-Rita Killelea, Ed Kirk, Rick Mahoney, Heather Nolin, Pat Sanders, Adam Spilka, Frank Twohill, Gina Wells

**Trustees (Absent):** Norman Dahl, Liz Ferguson, Polly Fitz, Jeff Vailette

**Guests:** Hatsie Mahoney, Friends of the Blackstone Library Liaison

**Staff:** Karen Jensen, Library Director, Katy McNicol, Associate Librarian for Development & Outreach

Maryann Amore called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

- 1) **Public Comments** – none
- 2) **Additions to the Agenda** – Beth Law asked that the Fall Appeal be discussed under Development Committee report. Maryann added the appointment of the new Assistant Treasurer under Governance Committee report. Ed Kirk made a motion to approve the changes to the agenda and Sandy Baldwin seconded the motion.
- 3) **Approval of Minutes (October)** –A motion was made by Sandy Baldwin to approve the October 2, 2019 minutes. Ed Kirk seconded the motion and all voted in favor.
- 4) **Director’s Report** –Karen Jensen had sent her written report in advance of the meeting. She noted that the library has been very busy and the new entry is wonderful. Karen reported that staff will be relocating the fiction area next week (dismantling shelves, etc.). She thanked trustees who’ve offered to help, but noted it is a gradual process that will be undertaken by staff. The teen area has been enthusiastically received and is naturally experiencing some “growing pains,” such as dealing with the noise level. Karen noted that once the children’s program area is in use, there will be improvement. Frank Twohill praised the teen program and noted the popularity of the teen room and how this population was enjoying the use of their own space in the library. Karen deferred to Hatsie Mahoney to discuss the Friends of the Blackstone’s Holiday Basket Sale; Hatsie encouraged Karen to continue. Karen reported that on Wednesday, December 11, 2019, the Friends will hold their basket sale in the lobby. There will be prosecco and cookies and beautifully curated holiday gift baskets for sale. Hatsie noted that gift-quality donations from trustees are welcome (examples included gift baskets in excellent condition, wine, non-perishable food, etc.). A hostess basket was suggested as a potential idea for a themed basket donation, which might include items such as a charcuterie board, candles, cocktail napkins, etc. Karen reminded trustees of the day-long conference sponsored by the ACLB on Friday November 8, 2019 held at the University of Hartford. She noted that Mary-Rita Killelea and Pat Sanders will attend the conference with her. Ed Kirk asked Karen if the library’s meetings rooms were open. Karen noted that the conference room on the top floor as well as the Lucy Hammer room are available for meetings; contact the reference department to reserve the space. Karen thanked trustees who volunteered to introduce speakers at the library; their efforts have helped staff a great deal. Mary Ann inquired as to whether or not the library had a “Sunshine Fund,” or line item in the budget for sympathy or congratulatory cards and gestures. Rick noted such expenses are taken out of “Board Expenses.”

5) **Treasurer's Report** – Rick reported that we are \$17,000 “under expended ” in “salaries.” Karen explained that a full-time staff member is temporarily working reduced hours and will continue to do so for a few months. Rick noted that under “health care” for the month of September, the library was also “under expended” for the same reason. Given that the same staff member will resume full-time employment at a date to be determined, this won't “go forward” for the long term. Rick noted that our stocks are doing well: “September was good. October even better.” He cautions that it's still “the same slow pace.” Rick reminded trustees that the finance committee typically determines where donations are best suited and that any fluctuations have been due to the market. Maryann asked Rick if the money coming in from fundraising goes to a general fund and Rick clarified that anything budgeted goes into the “budget to actual” accounting. Rick then explained the new guidelines for non-profits and noted that he and Kathy Oxsalida have many questions. As a result, trustees won't receive the 2018-2019 audit this meeting.

6) **Committee Reports**—*only as required*

**Finance Committee**— Rick noted that the Finance Committee has issued the RFP for the auditors. The return date is Friday November 29, 2019. The Finance Committee will interview three groups and will give preference to local accounting firms. Rick stated he will be able to present their selection in January and that gives them time to get the audit ready. Rick also noted that because we received the \$1,000,000 grant for our renovation, we will have a “state-single” audit for 2019-2020. The cost will likely be \$3,000-\$4,000 because there will be a number of tests on the \$5.5 million project. Rick noted when that is complete, the Finance Committee will move on to the RFP for financial advisor in the spring.

**Project Planning Committee**—

- **Project Update** – Karen reports that all is well inside the library. Unfortunately, there are issues outside the library. The Building Committee will meet on Friday November 8, 2019 at 1PM; she will report more information after the meeting. The rear dome has experienced deterioration due to water seepage; the brick stucco is crumbling and the iron is rotting. Clearly, the dome needs to be repaired. Rick noted that \$45,000 was previously spent to replace the gutter, which was thought to be the cause of the leak. The actual cause is unknown at this time. Ed posed a question about obtaining a historical grant to replace the dome. Trustees with experience in trying to obtain such grants noted that the effort would unfortunately be fruitless for several reasons. Rick noted that the library can't wait for grant money to come through at any rate because the issue needs immediate attention. An estimate to address the damaged dome will be available soon.

**Development Committee**—

- **Snuggle In & Read** – Beth Law shared the good news that there were 25 donations and that the “social media fundraiser” netted \$4,717 after expenses, which only included printing flyers. Beth thanked the many board members who donated. She reported that thank you notes were in the mail along with a coupon to pick up the book “Nature's Royal Tea Party” by local author and illustrator, Cheryl Kling, who donated 100 copies for the fundraiser.
- **Fall Appeal** – Beth reported that Katy will distribute the letters for the fall appeal and asked trustees to take a couple minutes to write a personal message to

potential donors. Letters should be returned to Katy by November 21, 2019. Last year's Fall Appeal raised \$31,621. The appeal was sent to 1,450 people. Heather Nolin suggested we couple the mailing with a Facebook appeal on "Giving Tuesday" and all agreed it was a good idea.

- **Governance Committee** – Sandra Baldwin reported that the committee sought to appoint a trustee who would shadow Rick Mahoney, as his term is almost over. They were very grateful when Adam Spilka stepped up to work with Rick and the finance committee. Sandra made a motion to appoint Adam Spilka as Assistant Treasurer and thanked him for his willingness to volunteer for the position. Ed Kirk seconded the motion and all voted in favor.
- **Capital Campaign Committee** – Karen reported that she received two donations towards the capital campaign. Dr. Norman Dahl and his family are donating funds to name the terrace furniture and The McLeod Family will donate funds to name the Youth Services Desk. Ed Kirk made a motion to approve the Dahl donation and Heather Nolin seconded the motion. All voted in favor. Sandra Baldwin made a motion to approve the McCloud family donation and Ed Kirk seconded the motion. All voted in favor. Ed Kirk posed the question as to what happens when we exceed donations over the \$800,000 capital campaign goal. Maryann suggested that the excess funds will go towards the unexpected construction expenses. Frank Twohill noted that we will need the RTM's approval and all agreed that this was a reasonable plan.
- **Celebration Committee** – Sandra Baldwin reported that the committee of 10 people (including trustees, Friends, and members of the capital campaign) met at the end of October. The "Celebration Weekend" will be held at the library on May 16 and May 17, 2019. There will be a cocktail party from 6-8PM on Saturday evening for donors and other invited guests. On Sunday, there will be an open house for families from 1-4PM for all members of the community to tour the new spaces. Sandra reported that the committee has begun its work and there is a lot of enthusiasm for the events. Beer and wine will be generously donated by Branford Wine and Liquor. There have also been commitments of donations towards expenses related to service and glassware rental, as well as floral arrangements for the event. Sandra noted that Polly Fitz's thank you remarks at the beginning of the cocktail party will be brief, under 5 minutes. It was reiterated that trustees are encouraged to also be present for the Sunday open house to answer community members' questions. Lastly, a map is being created to highlight designated new areas of the library as well as the named donated spaces and furnishings.

7) **Next regular meeting** – December 4, 2019 – Blackstone Library. Rick Mahoney made a motion to adjourn the meeting; Ed Kirk seconded the motion and the meeting adjourned at 7:01 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Gina Wells, Secretary